

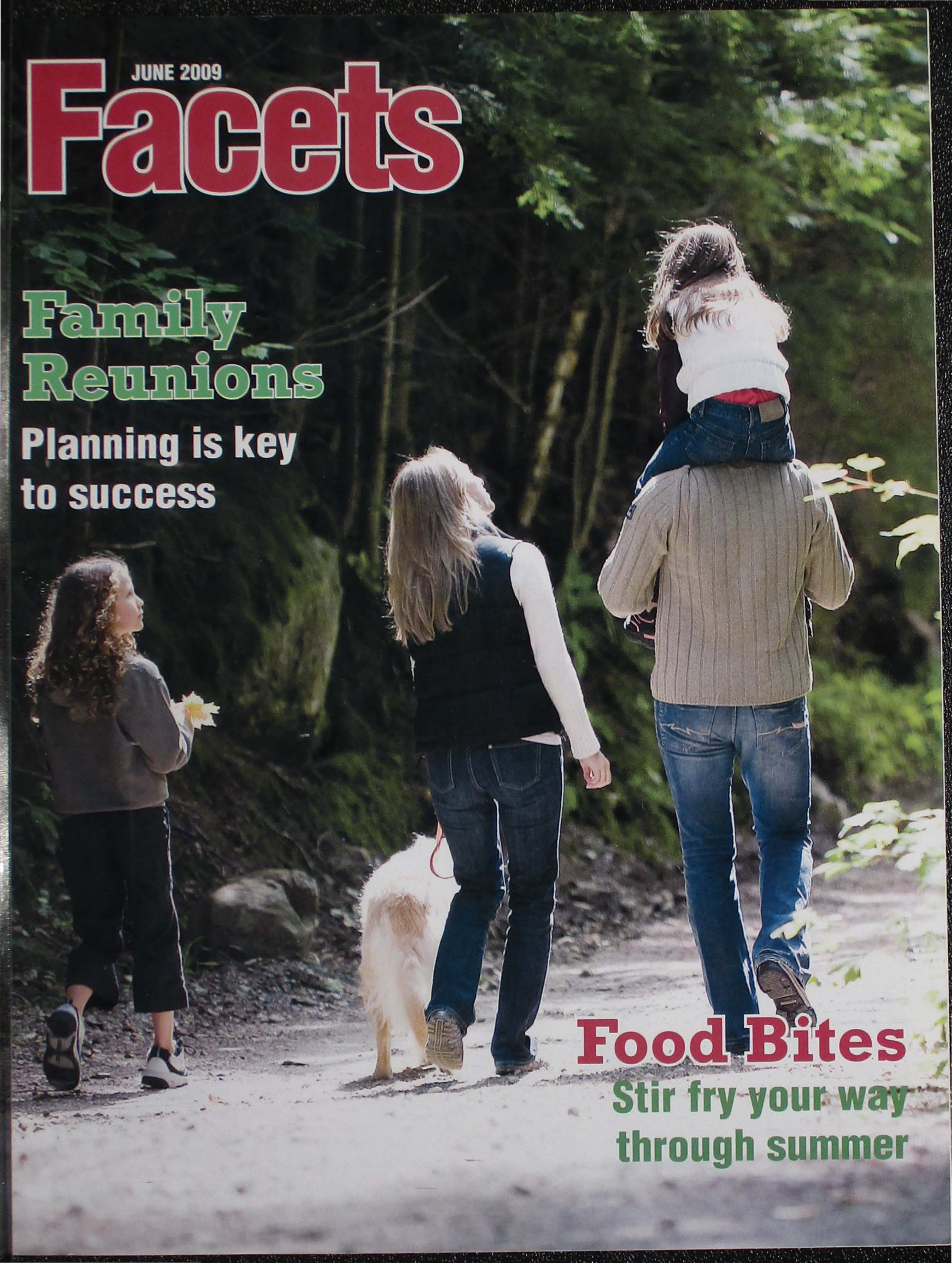
JUNE 2009

Facets

Family Reunions

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Stir fry your way
through summer





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.....
Amy Clark RD, LD



WELCOME TO Facets

Facet - 1. One of the flat surfaces cut on a gemstone.
2. The particular angle from which something is considered.

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In this issue

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>4 Fitness
Children need to stay active year round.</p> <p>5 Dietitian
Families who eat together eat healthier.</p> <p>6 A Day in the Park
Summer is a great time for a family reunion.</p> <p>7 Book Notes
'The Life and Times of the Thunderbolt Kid' is an entertaining read.</p> <p>8 Food Bites
Stir fry your way through summer.</p> <p>9 Facets June calendar</p> <p>10 Skin Care
How to pick the right sunscreen for you.</p> <p>14 Page 14 Colors, Textures & One Rose
Rosemary Heideman has a passion for fiber arts</p> | <p>16 Girlfriend's Guide to Financial Independence
Reinvention: It's a choice.</p> <p>17 Lessons from my Grandparents
How one woman's grandparents influenced her life.</p> <p>18 Memories of Childhood: Growing up on a Farm
Life was different on the farm back in the '60s and '70s.</p> <p>21 Faceted Woman
Meet Amy Clark.</p> <p>22 Hue & Cry
Budget friendly family activities.</p> <p>23 Designed to Express
Helping children decorate their bedrooms.</p> |
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Family-founded FITNESS

By DEBRA ATKINSON, MS, CSCS

Summer time, summer time! For some, it brings more carefree days and for others the concern of finding good childcare while at work, transportation for youth to and from sports or other activities, and sometimes just a different sedentary environment than a classroom. Summer time is definitely the time to take charge of your family's physical fitness routine and lay the foundation for good habits that will carry through when fall and winter approach again. Not too far into the future there may be changes ahead for Ames students.



If the Ames Community School district reduces both the frequency and the duration of physical education, and reduces the amount of recess an elementary school student has during the day, would it be helping your child or hurting them, both academically and physically?

Children and youth ages 6 to 18 years of age need 60 minutes or more a day of physical activity. Three days a week should include vigorous aerobic types of activity. Three days should include muscle strengthening and bone strengthening activities. How do you know if your child's schedule is accommodating their health and fitness needs? Vigorous would mean an activity where they are running, chasing and likely engaged with other children and noticeably breathing harder and experiencing a faster heart rate. Walking to school, if your child is fortunate enough to get some physical activity in their day this way, is probably a moderate level activity. Muscle strengthening activities might include rock climbing, rope climbing, some obstacle course activities or gymnastics for example. Children don't have to, but could, be doing weight training in order to get muscle and bone strengthening benefits.

Examine a typical child's day. With two working parents, afterschool daycare is a necessary part of the day for a high percentage of Ames families. Without careful

examination, this could easily be time spent in quiet activities, using the computer and watching movies. How much time at home is spent around meals, television, or computer and video games or other "screen time?" If your child isn't active during the day in a way that engages her physically to meet at least half of her activity needs, would she realistically be able to fit it in during a school day if recess were reduced and physical education duration and frequency both were cut? In consideration of the families with two working parents, would this be true of the majority of children in the district?

Studies have shown that a reduction of 240 minutes per week of class time in exchange for physical activity time consistently results in higher test scores. Physical activity is known to enhance memory in both adults and in children. It improves concentration, which is evident in mathematics, reading and writing performance. Further, as you speak to teachers, you find that behavior issues causing disruption in the classroom often reduce the effectiveness of their classroom time. Physical activity has been proven to reduce the disruptive behavior in the classroom.

Essentially, including more physical activity in the school day would result in better performance through concentration, retention and test scores. It would reduce the amount of energy a teacher expends on

behavioral issues therefore enhancing the impact that they can have on children in their learning environment.

Set up badminton nets and buy hula hoops. Invest in basketball hoops and bicycles. Plan outings that include physical activity as transportation to the main event, and reinforce the positive feelings that come from physical activity every chance you get. All levels of physical activity are important. Lower levels that can be sustained longer increase the amount of activity a child gets overall. Long bike rides, golfing and bowling all play their role. Sprinkle in the more vigorous activities when you can by adding a race to the top of the hill when you're on a walk or a jumping rope competition in the cul de sac.

Try to include spontaneous activities for the more sports minded youth. If they are only taught to be active when they are at practice or being coached, you'll create another generation of adults that are active just one hour of the day when they take the escalator to the gym instead of having an active lifestyle 24/7.

If when school time rolls around a child has the habit of being active, even a more sedentary school day won't interrupt it. Add the physical activity in before homework and it will take less time and have a much better score.

Eat dinner together

BY AMY CLARK, R.D., L.D.

In our everyday struggle to balance work deadlines, hectic schedules and social engagements, family mealtime often ends up being compromised. A study by Tufts University revealed that nearly 80 percent of parents consider eating dinner with their children very important, but less than 50 percent actually sit down together on a daily basis.

Unfortunately, families that don't make time for dinner may be headed for trouble. Recent studies from Harvard University indicate that families who eat dinner together are twice as likely to have better diets as those who do not.

Research shows that children who eat with their families:

- Are more likely to eat five or more fruits and vegetables a day.
- Are less likely to eat fried foods away from home.
- Are less likely to drink pop.
- Tend to consume more of the important nutrients like calcium and fiber while consuming less dietary fat and empty calories.
- Have higher academic scores and increased self-esteem.

Vitamins and minerals may be just the side dish. The entrée: the occasion to spend priceless time with your family. Bringing your loved ones around the table provides the opportunity to learn manners, practice social behaviors and discuss current issues. A family meal is the perfect vehicle to help demonstrate values and create a feeling of togetherness. It is not surprising that some research suggests that families who eat together have children who experience a lower risk of smoking, drinking, illegal drugs and depressive thoughts. Furthermore, studies show that family mealtime promotes academic success.

Getting your family to the table

Here are suggestions to get the evening meal on the table quickly and easily so you can make the most of your family mealtime.

Plan a weekly menu. Sit down at the beginning of the week with your calendar and your grocery store ad. Create your menu based on your family's schedule using the sale items for that week, taking into consideration your family's favorite meals and including a variety of foods from all food groups. If you have something on your mind and in the fridge for dinner, you are guaranteed to save time, spend less money and improve your nutrition.

Stock your pantry and freezer with quick-fix foods that can be on the table in minutes. Even quick-fix staples can be healthy, especially when combined with seasonal fresh fruit and low-fat milk. Look for available pre-cooked meats that cut preparation time down significantly. Keep frozen vegetables, pasta sauce and pasta on hand.

Cook once, serve twice. Assemble a quick second meal by cooking an extra chicken breast to use in a quesadilla, or a pork chop, or steak for a fajita. Brown two pounds of ground beef and freeze one pound for use later.

No time or too tired to cook? Pick up a roasted chicken that's "ready-to-serve."

Keep in mind that it may not be realistic for your family to eat dinner together every night of the week. Set a reasonable goal for your family and stick to it. Eating together three days a week would be better than none at all.

This information is not intended as medical advice. Please consult a medical professional for individual advice.

Garlic Chicken Skillet Meal

Serves 4.

Source: Hy-Vee Dietitians

All you need:

- 1 package Birds Eye Voila frozen garlic chicken skillet meal
- 1 (16 oz) bag frozen mixed vegetables
- Canned peaches
- Take & Bake breadsticks

All you do:

- Prepare frozen skillet meal according to package directions, adding 1 (16-oz) bag frozen mixed vegetables to skillet meal before cooking.
- Serve with peaches and breadsticks.

Nutrition facts per serving based on the main dish: 160 calories, 25g carbohydrate, 20mg cholesterol, 5g dietary fiber, 2g fat, 11g protein, 0g saturated fat, 390mg sodium, 8g sugar

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A day in the park

By ANN GREEN

There's something about a summer day in the park and family reunions. When I was young, my family would meet at a local park for a day of festivities. There'd be grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins. Some years my distant relatives would come — all the way from Florida or out east. They always added a little extra flair to the day. There'd be softball games, splashing in the creek, and stories passed among the group. There'd be food, a regular smorgasbord of chicken and meatballs and potato salad and, my all-time favorite, the dessert table.

With my family spread across the country, our reunions have become more extravagant ranging from a single day event at the Amana Colonies to a week-long stay in South Dakota. No matter the size or scope of a gathering, there are six basic points to consider when organizing a reunion.

Who's Family?

The first consideration, determining who's family may seem obvious, but it can be a little tricky. For some, the guest list includes relatives and close friends; others may include direct relatives; and some include all descendents of great-grandparents or even more. For example, my husband's family includes all descendents of Grandpa Bernard Green, but every three years they extend the gathering to include everyone related to Great-Grandpa Ben Green. Remember, every generational jump means including a lot more people. For Sue Ullestad's family, an average reunion includes about 35 people, but every five years they extend it, and approximately 80 people attend the reunion, more than doubling the number of people.

Choosing a Date and Location

Once the guest list is narrowed down, it's time to think about the date and location. Consider sending a family survey to gauge interest, narrow down possible dates and identify potential locations. Some families

have a long-standing date, such as the second Sunday in July; while others try to schedule the reunion around local events like Pufferbilly Days or the Iowa State Fair. Either way, the sooner the reunion is scheduled, the better so individual members can reserve the date. Sending mini-reminders might not be a bad idea, especially for the busy family member who forgets to mark the calendar. With today's technology, it makes sense to use e-mails, Web sites, and Facebook to keep the family updated.

Choosing a location is determined by many factors, such as accessibility, affordability, and potential activities. Consider a central location like a family church or homestead, a destination close to events like golfing and shopping, or for those traveling long distances, airport access and parking. For example, Hiram Philo's family travels to Clarksfork, Idaho, to visit their family's perpetual camp, Shadow Valley Ranch, for a week of camp projects and catching up on family news; while Wendy Swanson's group

enjoys golfing and shopping at Story City. This summer my family will be traveling to Winner, S.D., to visit the old homestead and enjoy my father's family stories. The location distinctly reflects the family reunion, so, with unlimited options, be sure to choose the location that suits your event.

Budgets

In these tough financial times, consider the individual family and the overall budget when planning the reunion. Keep in mind how much each family is being asked to contribute; whether in travel expenses, the cost of particular events, or family registration fees. Allow wiggle room for budgetary options; such as choosing a campsite instead of a pricier hotel.

Of course, the overall budget has a direct affect on the scope of the reunion and taking time to create a realistic budget can make all the difference. Once you know how much money is needed, it's time to collect the cash. Some families charge a meal fee or registration fee, others accept donations in a collection basket, and some families organize fundraising activities. Again, there are many different ways to fund the event; be creative. Remember to keep a log of all expenses and incoming money; proper record keeping will make for better organization of next year's event.

Committees

Organizing a reunion is a large project and getting more people involved lightens the load for everyone. For my husband's family reunion, Aunt Francis has been the long-

standing chairperson. Three family members act as her subcommittee; the subcommittee members are rotated from year to year. The committee organizes the activities, sets up the tables and cleans up the community hall. This works for my husband's family, but a larger event may require more organization. Good communication between committee members and using a calendar of tasks is a sure way to coordinate the event and guarantee everything is ready on time.

Food

Of all the activities at a family reunion, eating is the one event everyone participates in at the same time; what a great time to reconnect with family members. Potlucks were the standard for my childhood reunions. The variety of food was fantastic. Potlucks are economical and easy to organize — think about assigning categories like main dishes, vegetables or desserts. My mother always brought more food than her immediate family

would eat so there'd be plenty for everyone.

Keep on mind, potlucks aren't for everyone. But, once again, there are lots of options. If the budget allows, restaurants can enhance the theme. Look into local establishments for that bit of extra flavor for your reunion. Depending on your location, catering may be an option. Booking rooms with kitchenettes offers more solutions.

For reunions lasting multiple days, a combination of restaurants, catering, or self-serve may add spark to your meals. Don't be afraid to get creative when organizing meals for your group.

Activities

When it comes to activities, let your family be your guide. Does your group like to golf or fish? Do they like more formal or quiet activities? The Philos use their time together to improve the family camping grounds; while Wendy Swanson's family coordinates shopping and golfing along with wedding and baby showers. The Ullestads hold a

family business meeting during their reunion to donate money to charity.

Some families organize games and contests with prizes for the oldest family member or farthest distance traveled. My family had a traveling golfing mug. We drug it around from gathering to gathering, ready to pass it on to the next distinguished gofer. After their last get together, my neighbor's family is mulling around the idea of the Ugliest Toes Contest. I wonder what kind of prize you'd get for that. In the end, activities are great ice-breakers and help create lasting memories. In all your planning, don't forget about activities for the kids and look to your family for ideas. What do they like to do and what kinds of activities are available locally?

Summer's here. So pack up your picnic basket and grab a folding chair. Go collect some family stories and play some crazy games. Grab a piece of pie or one of Grandma's caramel bars. Find a cozy spot and soak it all in. Somehow family reunions and summer just go together.

Bill Bryson's memoir 'The Life and Times of the Thunderbolt Kid' is an entertaining read

By MARISA MYHRE

With focus on the family the theme of Facets this month, I began to look around for something about family that would speak to me. Something local I could connect to.

What I found was a book I've been told to read for a long time. Bill Bryson is an author known the world over and, better yet, the son of two journalists that worked for the Des Moines Register and a native Iowa boy.

For anyone who doesn't know, Bill Bryson is known for his travel guides more than his Iowa roots. He's traveled the world extensively and has an amazing sense of humor.

His latest book, "The Life and Times of the Thunderbolt Kid," is a memoir of his childhood in Iowa.

It is full of landmarks anyone familiar with Des Moines would know. Bryson acts as a tour guide, drawing a map of Des Moines for the reader. He takes your hand and walks you down roads such as Fleur, Grand and University of the 1950s. He gives you the mythology behind the crooked road leading up to the Capital Building and even talks about the peace of being so far away from everything on his grandparents' small farm.

It is a book about the 1950s as well. He discusses the atomic bomb and wonder behind new technology like television and refrigerators and the excitement of growing up in a world where the average person was able

to afford such luxuries.

But most of all, he does it with hilarity. This book isn't just funny. That's selling it far too short. It is absolutely gut-wrenchingly, roar with laughter hilarious. I found myself carrying it to social functions and family gatherings to read it aloud. This isn't unusual for me and most of my relatives rolled their eyes, but in the end they were asking to borrow it.

I had to carry the book around because when I told the snippet I found so funny I couldn't do it justice. Bryson has a tone, a way of talking about anything that makes it that much better. One of my favorite excerpts involves him talking about shoelaces in the 1950s and how one would always be longer than the others. It isn't that exciting a topic but when Bryson does it, it sticks with you.

He even talks about the atomic bomb and experiments the U.S. conducted involving burnt ash raining down on unsuspecting islanders in a way that makes you giggle.

He can be a bit crass, but that's to be expected of someone writing from the perspective of a 10-year-old boy. He curses occasionally. He tells an amazing story that's bound to make you cringe about his teacher's attempts to figure out how he bleached Lincoln Logs by licking them (I won't tell you which bodily excretion apparently accomplishes this but you can probably guess, and it isn't something you would want to lick).

To best express this point, here are a few examples of real gems found in Bryson's book:

"Other long periods of the day were devoted to just seeing what would happen. What would happen if you ... focused a white-hot beam of sunlight with a magnifying glass on your Uncle Dick's bald spot while he was napping. (What happened was that you burned an amazingly swift, deep hole that would leave Dick and a team of specialists at Iowa Lutheran Hospital puzzled for weeks.)"

When talking about his mother's warning not to eat potentially poisonous wild berries "... children in the 1950s didn't eat anything that grew wild — in fact, didn't eat anything at all unless it was coated in sugar, endorsed by a celebrity athlete or TV star, and came with a free prize. They might as well have told us not to eat any dead cats we found. We weren't about to."

Now that sounds familiar.

So if you're out looking for something that you can connect to, get a good hearty laugh out of, and walk away feeling good this is an excellent book to pick up. It's perfect for reading short snippets at a time as none of the stories are too long and are so thoroughly entertaining on their own spreading out the book only makes you chuckle more. This one will hold a place on my book shelf for years to come any time I feel the need to cheer up a little.

Stir fry YOUR WAY THROUGH SUMMER

By JOLENE PHILO

The growing season has arrived, and fresh produce is available all over central Iowa. You can make the most of summer produce by creating stir fry main dishes with whatever vegetables are in season each week.

A friend recently gave me this recipe for cashew chicken, and it quickly became one of our family favorites. The vegetables in the recipe provide quantity guidelines, but you can swap those listed with whatever you buy at produce stands or the farmers' market. Other vegetables to try include green or wax beans, cabbage, cauliflower, zucchini, summer squash, grape or cherry tomatoes, different varieties of peppers, and sugar snap peas. Be creative and discover the healthy flavor combinations the Iowa growing season has to offer.



CRISP VEGGIE TIP

Stir fry vegetables taste best when they are hot, but still crisp. To accomplish this, stir fry the "hardest" vegetable first and work down to the softest. For the vegetables in this recipe, the cooking order was: carrots, broccoli, pea pods, sweet pepper, onions.

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Joanie's Cashew Chicken

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|---|--|
| 3 tablespoons soy sauce | and cut into one inch slices |
| 3 tablespoons peanut butter | 1 cup peeled carrots, sliced into thin,
one inch pieces |
| 3 tablespoons honey | 2 cups broccoli florets washed and cut
into bite-sized pieces |
| 4 tablespoons sesame or peanut oil | 3/4 cup sweet red pepper, washed,
seeded, and cut into half-inch pieces |
| 1/2 cup cashews | 2-3 cups pea pods, washed |
| 1 whole chicken breast, cut into
bite-sized pieces | |
| 3 cups green onions, washed, topped, | |

Sauce: Combine soy sauce, peanut butter and honey in a 1 cup measuring cup. Heat in the microwave for one minute on high. Stir until peanut butter is mostly melted. Set mixture to the side.

Turn burner on high and heat 1 tablespoon of oil in a large frying pan or wok. Add cashews and stir for one minute, until cashews begin to brown. Spoon them onto paper towels to drain. Heat another tablespoon of oil in pan. Turn burner to medium high and add chicken. Stir until meat is completely cooked and begins to brown. Spoon chicken into a bowl and set aside.

Heat last two tablespoons of oil in pan and add vegetables, one kind at a time, at one minute intervals. Add chicken and stir until mixed. Pour sauce over all and stir until the stir fry ingredients are coated and sauce is bubbly.

Spoon mixture onto a bed of rice and sprinkle with cashews. Serve hot.

JUNE calendar

MONDAY, JUNE 1

Visit the gift shop at Reiman Gardens for some great summer sale items. Cost is free.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 3

28th-annual Women of Achievement Luncheon will be at 11:30 a.m. at the Polk County Convention Complex, 501 Grand Avenue, Des Moines. Cost is \$75. For more information, call (515) 244-8961.

Judge Story's Theatrical Troupe in Story City will perform "Seussical" June 3 to 7 at the Story Theatre/Grand Opera House. There is a 7 p.m. curtain time for the four evening shows and 1:30 p.m. show time for the Sunday matinee. Tickets are \$10, and are available at Norsemen Realty starting 601 Broad St., Story City, call (515) 733-2922, all seats reserved. MasterCard and Visa accepted.

THURSDAY, JUNE 4

Tune Into Main Street takes place every Thursday from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. Most businesses will stay open until 8 p.m. throughout the concert series, and there will be food vendors and children's activities to keep the whole family entertained. Cost is free.

JUNE 4 THROUGH JUNE 6

The Repertory Theater of Iowa will perform "All My Sons" at 7 p.m., June 4, 5 and 6 and June 11, 12 and 13, Terrace Hill, Des Moines, call (515) 280-3450 for more information.

FRIDAY, JUNE 5

A dazzling array of art will impress all who participate. ArtWalk includes music, food and fun as Ames' downtown business and organizations will host local artists and their work. Begins at 10 a.m. Cost is free.

Enjoy an enchanting evenings of music, dancing and socializing at Dancing Under the Stars at Reiman Gardens from 7 to 10 p.m. Cost is free for CoHorts' members, \$10 per person or \$16 per couple for the general public.

FRIDAY, JUNE 12

Coldplay will perform at 7:30 p.m. at Wells Fargo Arena in Des Moines. Tickets are \$35 to \$104.50, and are available at the Wells Fargo Arena Box Office, all Dahl's Foods, online, or by calling (866) 55-DAHLS.

FRIDAY THROUGH SUNDAY, JUNE 19 THROUGH JUNE 21

"Gooney Bird Greene and Her True Life Adventures" will be performed at the Ames City Auditorium. Tickets are \$5. For show information, call (515) 239-5365.

MONDAY, JUNE 22

Mormon Tabernacle Choir will perform at 7:30 p.m. at Wells Fargo Arena in Des Moines. Tickets are \$25 to \$75, and are available through the Wells Fargo Arena Ticket Office, charge by phone at (866) 55-DAHLS, www.dahlstickets.com and all area Dahl's Foods locations

SATURDAY, JUNE 27

Keith Urban with special guest Taylor Swift will perform at 7:30 p.m. at Wells Fargo Arena in Des Moines. Tickets are \$20 to \$76, and are available at the Wells Fargo Arena Box Office, all Dahl's Foods, online at dahlstickets.com, or charge by phone (866) 55-DAHLS.

ONGOING

Lynn Kaiser Trio, 5 to 7 p.m., Fridays, Hilton Garden Inn, 1325 Dickinson Ave., Ames.

Scottish country dance classes, 7:30 to 9:30 p.m., Fridays, second floor dance studio, Octagon Center for the Arts, 427 Douglas Ave., Ames, call Gayle at (515) 233-6841.

"Contemplate Japan," through Aug. 9, Brunnier Art Museum, Scheman Building, Ames, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tuesday through Friday, 1 to 4 p.m. Saturday and Sunday, free with \$3 suggested donation.

Oriental Snuff Bottles from the Permanent Collection, through Aug. 9, Brunnier Art Museum, entrance cases, Scheman Building, Ames, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tuesday through Friday, 1 to 4 p.m. Saturday and Sunday, free with \$3 suggested donation.

"The Early Years: The Founding Model Farm and the College," Farm House Museum, ISU campus, Ames, noon to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday.

"Campus Cottages on the Iowa State Campus," 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekdays, Special Collections Reading Room, 403 Parks Library, ISU campus, Ames, free.

Diane Foster's new mixed media art and prints, The Stomping Grounds, Ames, through June 15.

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I would like to introduce Susan Cross, ARNP who is joining my practice in Ames. Many of you know her already, and she is thrilled to be back in Ames to see patients. Susan has many years of experience in plastic surgery as a nurse and in dermatology as a nurse practitioner. Her special areas of interest is acne and aging changes of the skin and correction of both. - Kathy Cook, M.D., Board Certified Dermatologist, Skin Solutions Dermatology.

How to pick the right sunscreen for you

By SUSAN CROSS, A.R.N.P.

School is almost out. The summer sun has begun to show its face daily. And we are all more than ready to get outside and begin our summer schedules. As moms, we reorganize our kids' carpools with planning trips to the pool, tennis court or golf course for lessons, the park with its baseball and soccer fields ... and, of course we ask ourselves whether all of the plans have been finalized for our family vacation in July. It's the time of year we buy a new bottle of sunscreen and kindly educate our children to apply it daily and reapply after swimming.



One of the most common questions I get asked daily in the dermatology practice, is what sunscreen should I buy? The message is not as simple as SPF 30, because you need to know about the active ingredients of parsol (avobenzone), zinc or titanium. Making sure you've got both UVA and UVB coverage. But beyond that, the American Academy of Dermatology in 2009 has made it perfectly clear that you cannot forget about the important factors of avoiding the sun between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. (or when your shadow is smaller than you are) and protective clothing such as sunglasses, hats with brims and UV rash board shirts. All three of these elements (avoidance, protective clothing and sunscreen) are equally important. Everyday. As moms, we've heard these instructions for years and tried to teach our children to comply. But today, we have the opportunity to reveal to you a visual image of your UV exposure that you've accumulated over the years. The reveal imager from Canfield is a computer system that we have just introduced in our office. It captures two images, side-by-side, initially showing standard light and cross-polarization. The standard lighting image represents how your complexion looks in normal daylight while the cross polarization illumination is used to detect sub-surface skin details. Reveal's RBX software is then able to analyze your skin and display both red and brown conditions. The red

areas represent vascular conditions such as spider veins, rosacea and acne. The brown areas signal melanin concentrations, which are a form of hyper-pigmentation of sun damage or melasma. A picture is worth a thousand words has never been so impressive. Trust me ... when you see your photo, you will never again miss applying your sunscreen and grabbing your visor and shades. So after you get your picture ... what then? There are several aspects of evaluating your condition and making those recommendations. We have also implemented skin typing to help you understand your skin's hydration (dry or oily), skin sensitivity (sensitive or resistant), skin pigmentation (pigmented or non-pigmented), and wrinkled versus tight. This is a rather complicated analysis designed by researching dermatologist Leslie Baumann, M.D., director of the University of Miami Cosmetic Center, which is the first university-run cosmetic research center in the United States. From this analysis we will be able to give you personalized recommendations to meet your goals of sun protection and correction.

So as summer begins and families plan outings, family reunions or just getting outside on the deck ... don't forget that we're here to be your advisor to helping you accomplish the complexion that makes you look and feel your very best.

Susan Cross, A.R.N.P., Skin Solutions Dermatology.

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*...unique gifts and
personal service!*

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Paperweights

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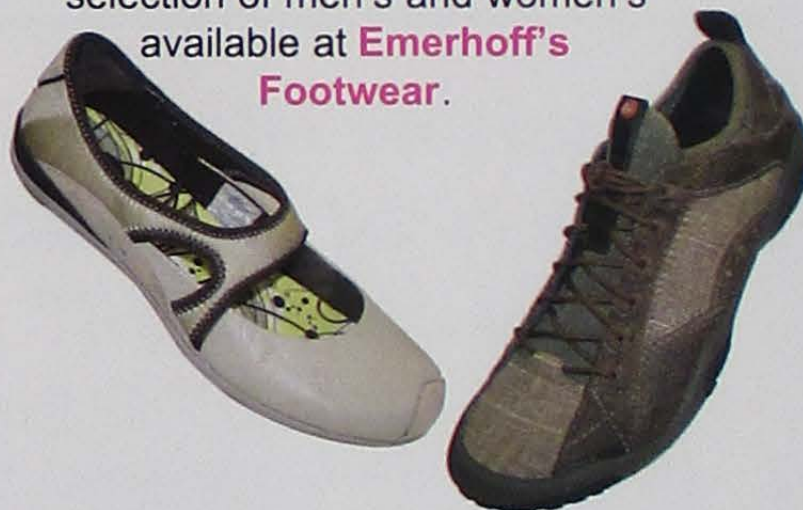
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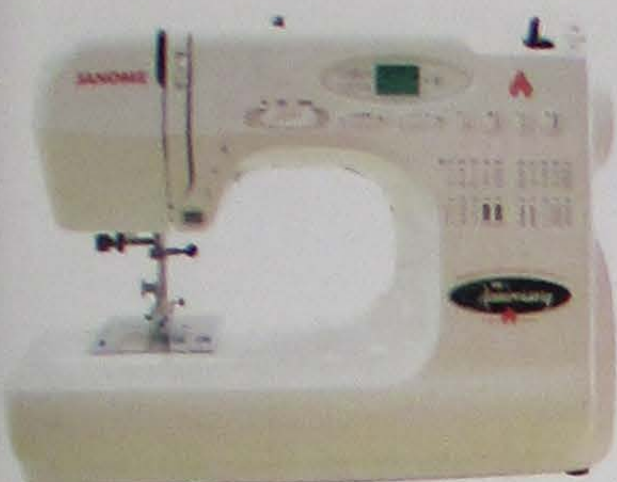
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Colors, textures & one rose



by JANE M. ZANTOW

Old Shakespeare knew it ...

"What's in a name? That which we call a rose by any other name would smell as sweet." And Rosemary Heideman by any other name would still sweeten our lives with her passion for fiber arts. A procurer of yarns, spindles, wool, dyeing supplies, carding tools, basketry supplies, felting material, looms, fiber art books, and spinning wheels, this Rose knows her fibers.

"I can't sell what I don't have," said Rosemary. So she keeps stock of it all.

For 20 years, Rosemary of RoseTree Fiber Shop in Ames, has been a steady hand and heart for many of us who appreciate the fiber arts. A woman of strength and creativity, she finds each new project, person and texture worth pursuing and seeing through to the finish. I walked into her shop the other day for an interview wearing a sweater I had knitted 17 years ago. She took one look at me and her eyes dropped quickly to the sweater.

"Is that handknitted?"

"Yes, it took me two years to complete it," I said.

It was a complicated intarsia, and my three children were young at the time. Plus, with all of those yarns to tie in as I knitted the complicated pansy design, my wrists would scream and threaten carpal tunnel syndrome if I didn't take my time. But she didn't care about all that, she looked at the sweater and I pointed to its obvious fault; the cuffs needed re-working.

"You could just open it up here and redo the cable. You don't want to go from the end, but unravel and rework the cable." And with a smile she turns. Never wanting to sound bossy or intrusive, Rosemary is an artist, an individualist, and a great respecter of people. Each person's quest is just that, each person's quest. However, here she is, owner and collector of goods for any knitter's ardor with an opinion worth listening to.

In my many visits to RoseTree Fiber Shop I have gladly become acquainted with Rosemary Heideman. But it was her logo that brought me in initially. I am a lover of roses. Mostly because my mother loved them. Once, a long time ago, I asked my mom what her favorite flower was. "Oh, I don't know. Probably a rose," she said. And since that time I was attached. I linked them intrinsically with her. I photographed roses over and over after my mother's passing. I painted roses, and I also created a stencil of a rose bush very similar to Rosemary's logo. That was my initial pull. The similarity was striking. It was a topiary of a rose tree, just like that logo, and I needed to visit. As a knitter, I visited the shop for other reasons (i.e. yarn). The selection at Rosemary's shop is quite satisfying. I return again and again. Each time I have my reasons; looking for a project (never a safe spot for a knitter on a budget), or just to muse. Upon entry, I touch the yarns and sense the ever growing eagerness of possibility.

But today, I'm sitting for a chat and interview. During our time together customers come and go. Mostly it is between serving and assisting her customers that we have our chat. I scribble my notes and she blasts me with the info ... "Too much," I think. "I cannot possibly contain this lady's energy." She may be going on 81, but Rosemary has the energy of a toddler ... running, running ... with thought



and potential. Rosemary is an artist with what she terms as, "My glass is never half empty, it's always half full."

Facets: "How long have you been knitting?"

Rosemary: "Seventy years. Well, I taught myself to knit when I was 10 and I'll be 81 in April, so that adds up to 70."

F: "How long have you owned and operated your shop?"

R: "Twenty years. Opened Pearl Harbor Day 1988, Dec. 7, in case you don't know (she laughs). I put my ideas into action."

F: "Did your mother knit?"

R: "My mother did not knit. Grandma had one sheep and she did spin. Her spinning wheel was in our house. It sort of sat there. There were needles and yarn in the house. Probably my grandma's. Grandmother died when I was six."

F: "What do you like about the fiber arts?"

R: "The tactile business of it. I like to do things with my hands. Growing up I would carve soap. I also taught myself to crochet, probably before I learned to knit. I enjoy the process."

F: "You also weave, right?"

R: "Not until I was in my 30s did I learn to weave and spin. You have to have raw wool and cards. It was on my list. Someday I'm going to learn how to do this. Well, someday I did!"

Rosemary shows me two wallhangings she has in her shop from a series of hangings she has made using the colors of the rainbow.

R: "I was green before it was popular. I've been in business 20 years and I have yet to buy my first bag." She recycles the weekly newspaper plastic bags and brings them to her shop for customers to take their purchase home in.

While we talk a couple of customers, mother and daughter, watch as Rosemary

shows me her loom. Wide eyed they wonder. "What are you making?" they ask. Rosemary is explaining to me the process of weaving, and it's much more complicated than what I'm prepared to write; "...beaming the warp ... threading patterns in the heddles ... slaying the reed ... two different ways to do it ... spacing out threads ..." all beyond my scope of understanding. So, I just wonder along side the customers, in awe of the potential before me. Afterward, Rosemary shows me her wall hangings and I marvel at her artistry.

"One of the things that appeals to me besides the mathematical pattern — before that, the color and the texture." I can't help but recall the fascinating rug she once had hanging in the shop window. When I ask her

what she made it from she tells me, "Mylar balloons and brown garbage bag, and some man-made sparkley threads."

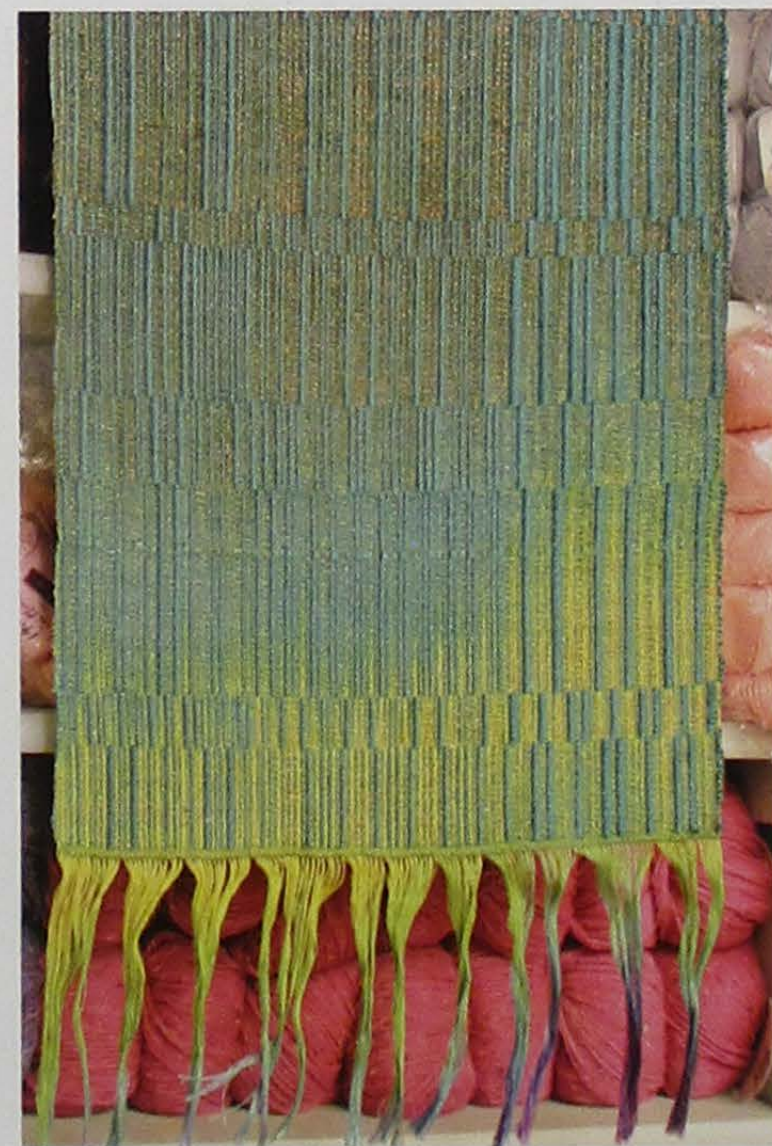
A treasure to her community, Ms. Heideman's warm demeanor lingers long after you leave with your newest purchase.

"No, I'm not going to sell online. I'd never see my customers ... One thing I didn't find out until I opened my shop is that I really enjoy my customers." Again as we chat, another example of sweetness arises. A woman comes in with a knitting project she is troubled by. She's dropped a stitch and doesn't know what happened. But, she doesn't want to be a bother so she has arrived with both her question and a pan of cupcakes. They are "Texas Cupcakes with caramel frosting, and not a single calorie in them," she said. Rosemary gently takes the difficulty from her customer and shows her it was a simple problem. She had just dropped a stitch and needed to go back to pick it up. "You had to bake me a whole pan of cupcakes for that?"

The RoseTree Fiber Shop offers classes with experienced teachers. Online listings of times and projects are available at <http://www.rosetreefibershop.com>. They are not likely to cloud the art with any airs of exclusivity, but much more likely to invite you in and nurture your curiosity.

Rosemary: "Women have such stressful jobs these days and they need something different ... I get a thrill from turning someone on to a skill, and it is satisfying. I don't mind if my students get better than what I do. Even now, and as long as I've been spinning and teaching, I learn from people."

Yes, a rose by any other name ... still the sweetness.





GIRLFRIEND'S GUIDE TO FINANCIAL INDEPENDENCE

Reinvention: It's a choice

Reinvent: *To remake or redo completely. Reinvent is a verb; it requires action.*

Money reinvention I: *Eliminate the bad news.*

I no longer allow bad news in my life.

Well that is a little strong ... to the best of my ability, I no longer allow bad news in my life.

You may wonder what eliminating the bad news has to do with money. Bad news, news that creates concern, affects my life. My mind doesn't say, "Come on, Karen, that is just the news; it does not have a direct affect on you today and it may not even be true. It is just someone's opinion of how to sell the story." No, when I hear all the bad economic numbers and predictions about the next victims of the economic crisis I have a heavy feeling; I begin to question my belief in our economy and the systems we have in place that allow our country and people to prosper.

Now that I avoid the bad news stories, I love to go to my office to share positive ideas and actions we can take to move through this tough economy time and position ourselves for better times ahead.

Is the news any different? Of course not, but my long-term financial attitude and plans are positive when I focus on the good in life; yours may be too.

Try it for 42 days (or try the seven day mini version) and let me know how you feel. Here's the method: Filter out the all the negative news.

You will know as much as you need to to function for the next 42 days. And if your colleagues know you are taking a bad news break, they will likely feel obligated to let you know all you are missing. After 42 days check how you feel: Are you more or less positive? Are you more or less stressed?

I would love to hear about your results, if could be material for a future columns.

The first small reinvention was aimed at eliminating some bad news in your life. The second small reinvention will bring joy into your life.

Definition II

Reinvent: *To bring into use again. Reinvent is a verb; it requires action.*

Money reinvention II: *Bring back common sense money management.*

There are two steps necessary to be a common sense money manager:

1. Spend less than you earn.
2. Automate your saving.

It's important to set aside money for retirement, for the kids' college education and for those unexpected life expenses, but there's another reason why it's more blessed to save than it is to spend. Saving money makes you a happier person.

Here are four reasons why saving money will help you feel good:

1. You can expect the unexpected without fear.
2. You can be ready when opportunity knocks.
3. You can make your dreams come true.
4. You can give back with joy.

Studies have shown that doing good for others creates healthier, happier, and even longer lives. "Giving is the most potent force on the planet," said Dr. Stephen Post, co-author of "Why Good Things Happen to Good People." "It is abundantly clear that people that live generous lives also live happier lives. One of the best ways to overcome stress is to do something to help someone else."

When you act on your charitable instincts, your returns are far more than you can ever give. Here are some ideas for finding your best giving opportunity:

- Look close to home for ways to help.
- Let your passion be your guide.
- Involve your family; work together to experience the joy of giving.

What could be better than a continuous loop of giving and receiving that helps everyone? When you make a difference in people's lives, it gives you energy and courage to forge ahead and see how much further you can go.

When I look at the world around me, children that go to bed hungry, families drinking unsafe water, and cities filled with war and violence I recognize how fortunate I am to live in this land of plenty. It is abundantly clear to me Sharing what I have is more than a responsibility, it is a privilege.

because life is ... more than money

Karen L. Petersen CFP® CDFATM is a fee-based financial advisor. You can contact her at (515) 232-2785 or karen@mymorethanmoney.net.

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Lessons from MY GRANDPARENTS

By SUE ULLESTAD

I have been influenced by my grandparents ... all four of them. My personality, values and beliefs have been handed down to me. They were not perfect, their deeds not always admirable, but they made strong statements on life as they lived out their own. In a class I recently took, the instructor asked us to write down how we have been influenced by our grandparents, to ponder how we have been blessed. I had never really given much thought to my grandparents' blessings to me. I will from now on for they have impacted my life in so many ways. This is the list I came up with:



My paternal grandparents: Lena and Adam Moeller

Grandpa Moeller

- Relax in a chair with your hands under your arms.
- Smile and just listen to other's stories.
- Have a sip of brandy on Saturday nights.
- Watch Lawrence Welk.
- Listen to music on the radio.
- Help out your adult children.
- Warn the grandkids of danger.
- Go to church every Sunday.
- Pray before every meal and before going to bed.

- Coach a youth baseball team.
- Play catch with your kids.
- God is to be number one in your life.
- Work hard.
- Travel as far as needed to see your family.
- Call your children often.
- Early to bed, early to rise.
- Watch the news every day.
- Wear a hat.
- Ride horses.
- Sing hymns with your relatives.
- Whistle.

Grandma Moeller

- Entertain the children.
- Read.
- Write articles about your experiences.
- Work hard outside.
- Pull weeds and always have a garden.
- Grow flowers.
- Sit outside and just relax.
- Do manual labor yourself.
- Hang out the wash.
- Pick berries.
- Have a dog for a pet.
- Save money.
- Wear jewelry.
- Join 4-H and go to the fair.
- Be active at church.
- Be friendly to all you come into contact with.
- Be involved in the community.
- Be in the kitchen as little as possible.
- Housework can always wait.
- Get together with the cousins often.
- Play the piano to relieve stress.
- Have your own opinion and express it.
- Music is good for the soul.
- Sing and play an instrument.
- Get up off the couch and do something with your life.

Grandpa Aspengren

- Tease others.
- Tell people about the funny, positive situations/comments from your workplace.
- Work hard.
- Shake hands with everyone you meet.
- Make visitors/family, "company," feel welcome.
- Smile a lot.
- Laugh a lot.
- Get groceries for your wife.
- Listen to a Cubs game.
- Relax in an easy chair.
- Pass the food around the table three or four times, at least.
- Show hospitality to others.

Grandma Aspengren

- Ask questions in conversation.
- Listen more than you speak.
- Show your family that you care about them.
- Have extended family over for meals.
- Watch "The Price is Right."
- Plant a garden to save money.
- Recycle, reuse.
- Dress modestly.
- Can your own peaches and eat them on top of ice cream.
- Read the Bible.
- Be content to be at home.
- Take care of elderly loved ones at home as long as possible.
- Don't be around those who bring you down very long.



My maternal grandparents: Violet and Albin Aspengren.

When you remember your mentors, you rediscover yourself. Remembering the values and beliefs of our loved ones in the generation who went through the depression or those from the "greatest generation" are key factors in who you are. These are our birthright gifts. I encourage everyone to recall what you were taught in your youth from your grandparents ... the good stuff. Write it down. You'll be amazed at the list defining yourself, then hand them down to the next generation.

Memories of childhood

LIVING ON A FARM



By PEGGY BEST

With the economy the way it is, it is making us all think of cutting back and how we can stretch our dollars. My mother-in-law loaned me a book recently entitled "Little Heathens: Hard Times and High Spirits on an Iowa Farm During the Great Depression," by Mildred Armstrong Kalish. Ms. Kalish is now 80-something and writes about her childhood on an Iowa farm. It brought back so many memories of growing up on our farm north of Gilbert and how different life is now. I could relate to many things in this book, even though I grew up on a farm in the '60s and '70s, we still followed many of the practices described from the '20s and '30s. Now, we don't give it a second thought to discard items that could easily be used for other tasks. For instance, when was the last time you darned a sock? Then, when it was so bad you couldn't darn it any longer, turned it into a dust rag. Or what about that cotton shirt that has a tear or maybe a stain. Now we either toss it or put it in the donation box. I loved reading in the book how they took old clothes, tore them into strips and made a new mop out

of them. Nothing went to waste a few decades ago. You want to talk about a recycling program, think how people had to manage back then.

In my childhood, we didn't do things really fast back then either. Dad had a 3-speed Ford pickup that was geared so low he had it in third gear by the time he'd turned the corner. My sister and I both remember riding with him to Ridgeport to pick up meat from the locker. We both thought

happened. We were both in awe that a short trip like that lasted an entire day when we went with dad.

It was so much fun reading this book and thinking how nice it was to live a much less complicated life than we do now. Life on the farm was, and still is, about survival. The gardens we planted were huge and necessary as we ate a lot of vegetables in the winter months that had been canned in the summer. I know

"The only time we even locked our car was in August, because if we didn't some neighbor would fill it with too much zucchini."

it was a long way away, taking an entire day to get there and back. When she was grown and married and living in Roland, she herself set out for Ridgeport to pick up an order she had placed, heading out at the break of dawn in to get there before lunchtime. She arrived in about 25 minutes. She called and told me what

my sisters and I helped with many of these tasks, but I sure wouldn't have a clue how to can a tomato today. Each year 100 baby chicks would arrive. How adorable they were, little yellow peeps that we fed and watered in the chicken house every day. I remember how dad kept them warm with heat lamps when they

were very tiny, and I can still recall the wholesome smell of corn and feathers in the chicken house. When the chickens were ready for butchering, it was no big deal to help dad catch the chickens, one by one as he beheaded them and stuck them in a tile to bleed out. Every once in awhile he'd behead a chicken and let it loose instead of putting it in the tile, and they really do run around "like a chicken with its head cut off" for several minutes. My job was then to dip the dead chicken in boiling water and pluck the feathers off. Then mom would take over and singe the rest of the feathers over an open flame, and continue on with the other tasks which I won't go into detail here. I would almost be willing to bet that if I had to do that today, I'd probably pass out, either from the site of blood, a beheaded chicken, or the smell of boiled feathers. But I do know that we handled lots of raw chicken meat and nobody ever ended up with salmonella. And I can almost guarantee that we weren't washing and scrubbing up every time we came in contact with raw chicken meat.

The only sports available for me to participate in were the ones

where we practiced immediately after school, and always at the school. Our folks picked us up and we were always home in time for dinner. Never did we venture off the farm after supper time, except for Friday night high school games. I don't remember growing up and having one supper (that would be called "dinner" now) that we didn't eat at home.

Blizzards were another huge difference between then and now. Our gravel roads could be drifted in for days and we'd be without electricity for just as long. We had one old, oil-burning stove in our kitchen, the only thing that would work without electricity, and we'd spend days wrapped in blankets at the kitchen table. All activities were done during the day, as in reading and writing, since there wasn't much else to do, because once it got dark you pretty much just went to bed. We would bake potatoes on top of that oil stove. As I look around our house, we have no way to heat the house if we were out of electricity for long periods of time. I remember last spring when the electricity went out in the neighborhood and watching all the neighbors pour out of their houses wondering what was going on and what they would do. It was only out about 20 minutes. I think our survival level is greatly depleted.

The late Paul Harvey did a radio segment called "Dirt Roads." Hopefully not infringing on any copyrights, I quote it here:

What's mainly wrong with society today is that too many Dirt Roads have been paved. There's not a problem in America today, crime, drugs, education, divorce, delinquency that wouldn't be remedied, if we just had more Dirt Roads, because Dirt Roads give character. People that live at the end of Dirt Roads learn early on that life is a bumpy ride. That it can jar you right down to your teeth sometimes, but it's worth it, if at the end is home ... a loving spouse, happy kids and a dog.

We wouldn't have near the trouble with our educational system if our kids got their exercise walking a Dirt Road with other kids, from whom they learn how to get along. There was less

crime in our streets before they were paved. Criminals didn't walk two dusty miles to rob or rape, if they knew they'd be welcomed by five barking dogs and a double-barrel shotgun. And there were no drive-by shootings.

Our values were better when our roads were worse! People did not worship their cars more than their kids, and motorists were more courteous, they didn't tailgate by riding the bumper or the guy in front would choke you with dust and bust your windshield with rocks.

Dirt Roads taught patience. Dirt Roads were environmentally friendly, you didn't hop in your car for a quart of milk, you walked to the barn for your milk. For your mail, you walked to the mailbox. What if it rained and the Dirt Road got washed out? That was the best part, then you stayed home and had some family time, roasted marshmallows and popped popcorn and pony rode on Daddy's shoulders and learned how to make prettier quilts than anybody. At the end of Dirt Roads, you soon learned that bad words tasted like soap.

Most paved roads lead to trouble, Dirt Roads more likely lead to a fishing creek or a swimming hole. At the end of a Dirt Road, the only time we even locked our car was in August, because if we didn't some neighbor would fill it with too much zucchini. At the end of a Dirt Road, there was always extra springtime income, from when city dudes would get stuck, you'd have to hitch up a team and pull them out. Usually you got a dollar ... always you got a new friend ... at the end of a Dirt Road!

Busy lives — busy families — busy times. Our lives are so busy now, running kids to all sorts of after school activities, evening classes, weekends filled with ball games and errands. The list goes on and on.

I guess I don't miss all the hard work that has been replaced with modern technology, but I sure miss the simplicity of life. If you want a blast from the past, I recommend buying a copy of Ms. Kalish's book, and maybe a needle and thread and make an attempt to darn those socks.



"Mom loves it here. And I love that she's just 20 minutes away."

-Pam Neff, daughter of Jo

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meet a faceted woman



AMY CLARK

Age: 28 | Ames Hy-Vee Registered & Licensed Dietitian | Travis, husband; Ethyn, son

What would you do with \$1,000 to spend on yourself?

I've always wanted to go to Hawaii, so I would use the money toward a vacation to Hawaii with my husband and son.

Your favorite meal: Salmon, Uncle Ben's Sun-Dried Tomato Florentine wild and long grain rice, side salad.

Craziest fashion you ever wore: During my college years, I had this pair of tan pants with a black sparkly overlay that my mom called "chandelier pants." I

loved them for some odd reason. After storing them in the closet for seven years, I finally let them go last summer. When I think about them now, I sometimes wonder what in the world I was thinking then ... when I bought them.

I never leave home without: My cell phone. These days, I'm lost without it. Ten years ago, it was rare that I carried one.

Your favorite motto: To climb steep hills requires a slow pace at first.

What makes you happy? My family,

friends, a good comedy and food.

What makes you laugh? My son's many facial expressions. My husband's humor. Both of their dance moves! My poor son is taking after his dad on that one.

Do you believe in New Year's resolutions? Do you have one this year? If they aren't extreme, out-of-reach resolutions, then yes. I actually didn't think of one this year.

Best tip to look and feel great: Make time for you and do something you enjoy.

If you could do or be anything you want, what would it be? If I could be anything, I would do what I am doing now. Being a Hy-Vee dietitian is something I've always wanted to do. I like to increase awareness of the impact nutrition can have on well-being and quality of life. What better place to do that than in the grocery store where food choices are made everyday.

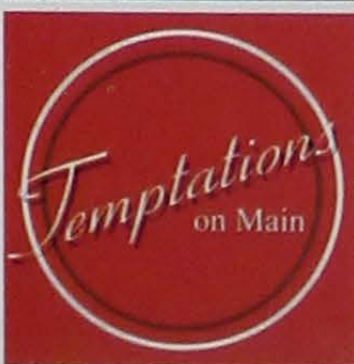


If you knew then what you know now, what would you have done differently? Nothing. There's always a reason for the paths we choose and the paths we are currently on.

My simplest pleasure: Getting lost in a good book.

I crave: Chocolate covered strawberries. Thank goodness they are not readily available.

I am thankful for: My family, friends and my job.



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What is your favorite kind of chocolate?

AMY CLARK

I prefer milk chocolate, but that is one of my trigger foods so I could not enjoy just one. There's no savoring chocolate at my house, so let's just say I typically don't have milk chocolate sitting out on my counter tops.



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No matter what your situation is The Ames Contracting Team can help...

When Ruth and Hubbard David decided to remodel their kitchen, it was not under the best of circumstances. "No one in their right mind would choose to do this in the middle of winter!" Ruth David exclaimed. The Davids were left without a choice when a car drove through their kitchen wall setting off a domino effect that sent appliances crashing into each other wreaking havoc throughout the room.

"It was a bit of a shock," recalled Ruth David and she did not approach rebuilding her kitchen with the same enthusiasm many homeowners do. "It was a chore I wanted to run away from," she said. In the six years they had lived in their home, the Davids had not taken on a major project to update the space and they were not anxious to do so in the dead of winter. They gave Geisinger Construction a call and the stressful project became a little easier.

"They were absolutely first rate, nice people - decent, understanding, undemanding, and helpful in every way," said David.

The remodel proved to be extensive. The wall was repaired. The appliances were all replaced and a new sink and countertops were added. Laminate flooring was installed by Flooring Gallery and the entire room was painted by Winkler & Sons Painting. David describes the color as an "ivory, pinky, creamy color," with a dark brown accent wall in the breakfast nook. "It is friendlier because this was our choice and not the choice we moved into. It is homier and friendlier now," she added.

David is free with her praise of the company who helped her make the best of a bad situation. "I was very pleased with Geisinger and one couldn't have had more pleasant people if I had chosen them all myself," she said.

Despite their initial reluctance to remodel, the Davids are thrilled with their new kitchen. Asked if she is glad they had their kitchen updated, Ruth David responded with enthusiasm, "Oh yes!"

Thompson Electric and Gibbs Plumbing & Heating also contributed to the kitchen remodel.



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Definition: Any loud clamor or protest intended to incite others to action.

By MARY HALSTRUM, *Facets Editor*

The memories I have of my childhood summers are simple and never involved large amounts of money. There were trips to A&W for chili dogs and root beer; driving with my dad down to the Tastee Freeze to get a slush; playing tag and riding bikes with my older brothers; going camping with my mother, stepfather and best friend Keri; jumping rope with neighborhood kids; and swimming all day at the local pool. There weren't many family vacations, per se, as money was tight. Going to the Iowa State Fair was a treat, and if we were lucky, sometimes a trip to Adventureland or Worlds of Fun fit in our budget.

The thing is, I had a blast, and whether we had money or didn't have money didn't seem to matter to me much, and it still doesn't. My happiness has never been tied to where my family fell on the economic scale. What I valued most then, and now that I am married with two children of my own, is spending quality time with my family. And usually a lot of money isn't required to do that.

Budget friendly fun

- Recently my daughters and I packed a

lunch of PB&J sandwiches, chips and juice, and headed off to the park for a picnic. Located just one mile from our house, the park is one of our favorite places to go. Weather permitting, we go there three to four times a week. The park has sand, swings, picnic tables, tennis courts and a fountain to cool off in during the summer.

- Gardening is another summer interest my family has developed since moving back to Iowa. My daughter Katharine made her gardening list back in February, and in late April she and my husband went to Home Depot to buy what they needed, and the following weekend the garden was planted. So hopefully, come August, we'll have onions, bell peppers, tomatoes, broccoli, carrots and cauliflower to eat, all grown in our own garden.

- Wagon rides are a great way to get some exercise for me and my husband, and the girls can't get enough of them. They get completely comfortable in the wagon, one of ours has a shade and cup holders, so the girls can bring a drink if it's a hot, sunny day.

- Washing the car is something the entire

family can do together. It's fun and it's cheap.

- Yard work is a great family activity as long as proper safety measures are taken. My daughters love to help with raking leaves and bagging them up.

- Playing baseball with a soft bat and ball, think Nerf brand, for the little ones, is a great way to teach kids about baseball and keep them active at the same time.

- Putting on swimsuits and running through the sprinkler in the back yard is an alternative to going to the swimming pool, which can get expensive.

- Renting a DVD, making popcorn and watching a movie is an inexpensive family activity.

- If going to a campsite isn't in the family budget, pitch a tent in the back yard and camp outside with the kids.

The thing with kids is they don't care about money. Sure, they like toys and getting new stuff. After all, they're human. But what they really care about is family. And thank goodness, time with mom and dad is still free, but at the same time, it's the most valuable thing in the world.



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By CLARE BILLS

"Teaching children a variety of skills increases their confidence," my mother always says. And who am I to argue with my own mother? If a mom is too afraid that children will make a mess, break something or create something unusable, kids won't learn to stretch their creative muscles. Whether you have preschoolers or teens, I encourage you to let your offspring decorate their own bedrooms. Here are a few simple suggestions to get you started:



- Choose a theme. Your children may come up with ideas based on an historic era, a game or hobby, nature or a favorite character from a book. Imagine a room based on the game Chutes and Ladders or a rain forest or the classic "Alice in Wonderland?" If you're stuck, some paint stores have pamphlets that spell out the exact hues and patterns to achieve the look you're after. A dramatic checkerboard just made this race car room. (See photo.)
- Explore color schemes together. Some mom's want the children's room to blend in with the color palate of the rest of the home, (usually beige) but this is one rule you may want to rethink. If your little one loves purple and you break out in hives at the mention of it, perhaps a purple bedspread would be a good compromise. Or paint a focal wall purple. Here's a helpful Web site, www.colorschemedesigner.com. Choose a favorite color and then click on a color scheme, such as monochromatic, complementary, triad or others and the program builds the palate before your eyes. It's a great lesson using the color wheel.
- Roll that paint together. Kids love being involved and if you've taped off the woodwork and have drop clothes on the floor, you'll have less to fear. Of course, the younger they are the more closely you'll have to supervise, but it's a great team project. And painting skills are ones they can use their entire life.
- Liven up dull walls with a faux finish. Be sure the basecoat paint is an eggshell or satin sheen before applying a glaze for best results. Paint stores sell a few glazes that are

already mixed. Umber is popular because it's so neutral (and works well over beige) but a soft pearl or opal glaze is a subtle choice over a pale tint. Use this general guideline: to achieve a subtle look, choose a glaze color very close to the shade of the basecoat paint. For more drama, choose a glaze in a contrasting color.

- Add some flair with a bit of stenciling. I helped two young children stencil fish randomly over a watery finish I created on in the kid's bathroom walls. We used very dry brushes and I taped the stencils down securely on the wall for clean lines. (Pictures are on my Web site under stencils.)
- Personalize the furniture. Add whimsical highlights through hardware, paint treatments or stencils. Repeat colors that you've chosen for the walls, curtains or bedspreads for a unified color scheme. I love to turn castoff furniture into unique pieces, such as the sewing table that was painted in several colors and embellished with butterflies. Simple hand-painted designs or stencils can also be a fun way to add some flair to old chairs, headboards or dressers.
- Give blackboard paint a go. If you have a budding artist who is always drawing on the walls, perhaps you could find a dedicated wall — or the inside of a closet door — and transform it with this specialty paint found in home improvement stores. Provide colored chalk and a blackboard eraser and your artist is free to express herself — within limits.

Once the artist has emerged in your child, she may want to help you add some punch to the rest of the house. Something besides punch stains in the carpet.

Clare Bills is a decorative painter from Ames. She can be reached at clare@colorfauxdesigns.com or 515-292-3210, or go to her Web site at www.colorfauxdesigns.com.



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